

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IGA-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 SNM-05 AGRE-00 OES-07 /076 W
-----115740 240853Z /14

O 240745Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4799

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0256

EA FOR OAKLEY, HEGINBOTHAM AND FRITTS; AID, AA/ASIA FOR SULLIVAN

ADLER AND STEINBERG FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: NGDS
TAGS: EAID EFIN IBRD BM
SUBJ: IBRD CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING: POSSIBLE USG ASSISTANCE TO
BURMA

REF: (A) 77 RANGOON 3522, (B) 77 STATE 265433

1. I HAVE NOT BEEN AT POST FOR THREE MONTHS. IN THAT PERIOD,
I HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY BRIEFED BY THE MISSION STAFF, HAVE BEEN
THROUGH THE "OBJECTIVES AND GOALS" EXERCISE AND THE ANNUAL ECO-
NOMIC POLICY REVIEW, HAVE CONVERSED WITH SELECTED GUB OFFICIALS
AND MOST OF MY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND HAVE MADE TWO TRIPS INTO
THE INTERIOR. I NOW FEEL SUFFICIENTLY CONFIDENT OF MY KNOWLEDGE
OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN BURMA TO BELIEVE THAT I CAN AND SHOULD
NOW OFFER SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE FUTURE SHAPE AND DIRECTION OF USG
PROGRAMS IN BURMA. IN VIEW OF THE IMMINENT IBRD CONSULTATIVE
MEETING IN PARIS, THIS FIRST POLICY-ORIENTED MESSAGE IS DIRECTED
TOWARD THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THAT MEETING. MOST OF THE FOLLOWING
IS CONSONANT WITH THE RECENT SULLIVAN/BEAN AND OAKLEY/BEAN CONVERSA-
TIONS IN HONG KONG AND RANGOON TO WHICH THE WASHINGTON OFFICIALS
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INDICATED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE.

2. I WOULD HOPE THAT, AS SUGGESTED REF A, THE USG WILL MAKE
A POSITIVE STATEMENT IN PARIS CONCERNING ITS WILLINGNESS
TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE GUB. WE NEED NOT
QUANTIFY OUR OFFER BEYOND INDICATING THAT INITIALLY ANY-
THING WE WOULD BE ABLE TO DO WILL OF NECESSITY BE MODEST.

ALSO, RATHER THAN TALK IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS, WE COULD INDICATE THE SUBJECT AREAS IN WHICH WE THINK WE COULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE (HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE, AND AGRICULTURE COME IMMEDIATELY TO MIND AND WOULD REACH THE PEOPLE IN THE GREATEST NEED. THE BURMESE MAY HAVE OTHER IDEAS WHICH WE SHOULD SOLICIT AND CONSIDER). IN ADDITION TO THE PL-480 PROPOSAL MOOTED IN REF A, WE SHOULD CONSIDER MODEST GRANT ASSISTANCE, SAY \$2-3 MILLION.

3. THE PARIS SCENARIO COULD BE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: (A) U.S. DELEGATION MAKES AN UNQUANTIFIED OFFER DURING THE MEETING; (B) IN A PRIVATE MEETING WITH GUB DELEGATION, USG DELEGATION EXPLAINS WHAT WE ARE WILLING/ABLE TO DO AND SOLICITS GUB THOUGHTS ON WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE FOR US TO DO. OF COURSE, WE SHOULD MAKE SURE GUB UNDERSTANDS LEGISLATIVE/FISCAL RESTRAINTS UNDER WHICH WE MUST OPERATE; AND (C) USG OFFERS TO SEND SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICIAL TO RANGOON A MONTH OR SIX WEEKS SUBSEQUENT TO THE PARIS MEETING TO DISCUSS DETAILS WITH GUB AND EMBASSY (PERHAPS DAVID STEINBERG WOULD BE THE LOGICAL CANDIDATE).

4. I RECOGNIZE THAT PROPOSAL CONTAINED IN THIS MESSAGE IS A DEPARTURE FROM THE RECENT PAST. HOWEVER, I HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT WE SHOULD OFFER AT LEAST SYMBOLIC ASSISTANCE TO BURMA ABOVE AND APART FROM OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE (WHICH THE GUB VIEWS AS BEING AS MUCH IN CONFIDENTIAL

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OUR INTEREST AS THEIRS). I HAVE REACHED THIS CONCLUSION CAUTIOUSLY, BUT WITH CONVICTION. I WOULD BE DELUDING MYSELF AND MISLEADING YOU IF I DID NOT INDICATE THAT MUCH OF THE BASIS FOR THIS CONCLUSION ARISES FROM POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. WE HAVE CURRENT IMPORTANT INTERESTS TO PROTECT AND SHOULD TAKE OUT A SMALL INSURANCE POLICY FOR A FUTURE THAT NONE OF US CAN PREDICT AT THIS TIME. IN ADDITION, A GESTURE AT THIS TIME WOULD BE LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP WHO, WE ARE BEGINNING TO SENSE, ARE GAINING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE USG DOES NOT TAKE THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP SERIOUSLY. ALSO, FOR A RATHER MODEST COST, WE CAN DEMONSTRATE OUR OFT-STATED RESOLVE TO REMAIN AN EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC POWER. WE ARE EXPECTED TO AID OUR ALLIES AND IDEOLOGICAL COLLEAGUES. IT IS RESOUNDING STATEMENT WHEN WE EXTEND OUR HAND TO A NATION WITH WHICH WE APPEAR TO HAVE SO LITTLE IN COMMON.

BEAN

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